

Google Searches

The Google search box has become the new oracle for many of us, the thing we consult before all major undertakings. How do I know this?

Through Google Suggest, of course. For those who don't know how Suggest works, this sums it up nicely:

Google Suggest is, essentially, a list of the most popular queries that start with a given prefix, generated from recent search activity. A suggestion-enabled search is like an instant popularity contest. Just type in a couple of letters, and you've got access to oodles of data on what your fellow Web surfers are hunting for.

Google Suggest is a helpful feature. It's a little sliver of the collective mind. It's also a lot of fun to mess with.

However, the internet has lots of great examples of misfires served by Google. For example, if you type in "I am extremely", amongst other suggestions, you will find, "I am extremely terrified of Chinese people." But one thing I did find very interesting, was an article which uses Google for some armchair sociolinguistic analysis. The graphic compares "less intelligent" queries with "more intelligent" queries, such as "how 2" with "how might one."

Typing in 'how 2' will get results like:

- How 2 unlock
- How 2 kiss
- How 2 get pregnant
- How 2 hack a myspace
- How 2 get a six pack
- How 2 grow weed
- How 2 make a website
- How 2 unblock sites
- How 2 hide friends on myspace
- How 2 tie a tie

But if you type in 'how might one', instead of "how 2", here are some Google suggestions:

- How might one account for the rise of Andrew Jackson to the victory in the election of 1828
- How might one correct the ph of a lake with a reading of 3
- How might one protein differ from another
- How might one discover a new piece of music
- How might one expand upon an argument
- How might one test if beak size is due to genetic or environmental factors
- How might one treat poisoning from curare

You can spend entire afternoons duplicating this experiment. If you type in 'what is up with', you might find some suggestions like:

- What is up with Jon and Kate
- What is up with Joaquin Phoenix
- What is up with Jermaine Jackson's hair

What is up with facebook

What is up with seal's face

What is up with Kate Gosselin's hair

What is up with hotmail

What is up with Jon and Kate Gosselin

What is up with north korea

But if you type in "how is it that", Google suggests:

How is it that some bacteria live in the hot springs of Yellowstone park

How is it that satellites can detect differences in primary productivity on earth

How is it that all computers can communicate via email

How is it that a continent should be ruled by an island

Grammar also seems to make a difference.

Try typing "you is" and you get:

You is trolling

You is a jerk

You is what you is

You is my girlfriend

You is my hot rabbit

You is a pronoun

But if you type "you are", you get:

You are not alone lyrics

You are my sunshine lyrics

You are what you eat

You are so beautiful lyrics

Perhaps "less intelligent" vs. "more intelligent" isn't the kindest or most accurate way to classify these queries. Some of the "more intelligent" queries are clearly high-schoolers desperately trying to get their homework done. And some of the "less intelligent" queries are no doubt very smart people distracting themselves with Google in an idle moment.

But thinking about this, I realised that this is not that far removed from the meaning of communion. That God, sending His only Son to remove our sin by dying for us, has made a search function available to us – a direct line between us and God.

Matthew 7:7-8 says, "Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. (8) For everyone who asks receives; he who seeks finds; and to him who knocks, the door will be opened."

Matthew 26:26-28: And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to the disciples and said, "Take, eat; this is My body." (27) Then He took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, "Drink from it, all of you. (28) For this is My blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many for the remission of sins."

Let's take a moment to remember why we are celebrating communion this morning.

Let's eat and drink.